

[Belief or Truth with Jennifer Porter](#)

Donna Cowan [00:00:02]:

Welcome back, everyone. We are here at The Writer's Parachute, guiding author and writer dreams to a perfect landing. Today we have with us another special guest. On season 2, we have Jennifer Porter. We're going to be talking about her book that's behind me, *The Frozen*. It's the Ziannova, I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing that correctly, Chronicles and this is book 1. So we're going to come back to that and talk to Jennifer in just a minute. Of course, we always want you to hit that subscribe button, and smash that like button here on YouTube. If you're following us on one of the YouTube channels, of course, we'd love for you to follow there. Also, if you could follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or TikTok @writerparachute, that's writerparachute with no 's', we would appreciate it.

So we're going to start off with the topic of the week, and as we said earlier, we are devoting most of season 2 to reviews. Reviews are king for authors and writers. They are very, very important, very critical to getting yourself seen, heard, and known out in the book world. So we've talked a little bit about how to ask for reviews, how to get reviews, about the editorial reviews, about the paid reviews. We've talked about how to optimize some of the other platforms outside of Amazon for reviews.

Today we're gonna talk a little bit more about Amazon and their peculiar and specific rules about reviews. And what we like to call the difference between enticing someone to write a review for you versus asking someone to exchange a review. There is a big difference. If you're unfamiliar with Amazon's rules around reviews, you can go to the community guidelines. It's on the Amazon webpage. You can go to community guidelines under the help section at the bottom of the page, it will clearly spell out what is allowed and what is not allowed.

One of the things that is not allowed is exchanging reviews. I see this often, and I think people don't quite understand what they mean by exchanging reviews. So yes, you can generally ask people to review your book. That is always allowed. What you cannot do is go to a specific author and say, how about you review my book and I'll review yours? That is technically not allowed, but I do see it a lot. So be very cautious and careful, because what can happen is if you get caught doing this, they could, you know, pull your book for a short term, they could end your author central account, or they could permanently remove your book. So be very careful, make sure that you do fully read the community guidelines for Amazon, especially regarding reviews. This is where I see most authors get themselves into trouble.

Also, I want to reiterate, reviews do not have to be difficult. They can be short and sweet. I like this book. I didn't like this book. This book spoke to me in a certain way. They can be short, long, somewhere in between.

And you can ask for reviews. What you cannot ask for is a good review or five-star review. What you can ask for is an honest review. So make sure that you're keeping that wording correct and that you're following the community guidelines.

An enticing review would be to say on a social media post, look my book is free this week, why don't you go grab a copy and when you're done post an honest review. That's enticing readers to review your book. Again the difference between enticing and exchanging would be if you're specifically saying to another author or a group of authors, please go review my book, go give me a five-star review and I'll review your book. That's technically not allowed, so be very, very careful. Make sure you are checking out those community guidelines and you understand the difference. So that's kind of our topic of the week.

We want to get on with our show and get to Jennifer Porter. She has written the book, *The Frozen*, a Ziannova Chronicles, Book 1. Jennifer Porter is an award-winning educator and author who promotes faith and interdependence. She and her husband live in Cedar Rapids, Iowa with her family, fish, rescue dogs, and plenty of dad jokes, and never enough *Star Trek*. Welcome to the Writer's Parachute. Jen, how are you today?

Jennifer Porter [00:04:58]:

I am great. Thank you for having me.

Donna Cowan [00:05:02]:

Well, we're always excited to have new and interesting authors here. Now, you and I've known each other for quite a while, and while we write in different genres, we kind of work together. You come to some of my writing groups, and we've known each other through Author Academy Elite with Kary Oberbrunner. So it's been a long time and I'm very excited to get to talk to you about your book. I was, let's say, a little surprised. I love the book. I haven't been able to finish it yet. But so far, what I've read has kept me glued to the pages. And I was a little surprised about the way that you're presenting the material.

Q: So I want to know why this journey into faith and science was so important as a topic to put in a book in the first place, and then we'll talk more about the meat of the book.

Jennifer Porter [00:05:57]:

Well, it was a bunch of things that came together all at once. When I, I'll just back up, I started this when I was in high school, then I put it down for about 25 years. And then all of a sudden, one night I woke up and it was like things had been downloaded into my brain. And so it was like God said, "you know what, you have everything you need now, this is ready to write, so get on it."

And those things that came together in that moment, were...my church was dying. So I was an elder in the church at the time and it was mostly by default because no one else wanted to be an elder in the church! That was the first time I'd taken on a leadership role at church really. I just noticed that from that position, you see and observe a lot about your congregation and people that you're with, and I love them dearly. We still talk the whole, the remnant of our church congregation still meets to eat together and talk and support each other in prayer and everything else. I mean, it wasn't that they weren't real Christians. They are, They were. They wanted the church to survive. They wanted good things to happen. But what was really happening was the church was dying because nobody wanted to change a tradition. And because everybody in the church was kind of a little clique, like "these are our members...and that's it."

You know, "yes, we welcome new people in and we'll say hi to you..." And, you know, there were a couple of people when I came to the church, you know, 15 years before that, who really stuck out to me as welcoming. And both of them had passed away before. One of them passed away just *as* this was all going down—but they reached out—and most of the other people did not.

You know you kind of had to be there and be there and be there and like 5 years later they would start saying hi to you and start talking to you, you know. I've noticed... I've moved a lot as an Air Force brat and my parents are pretty strong Christians and I'm blessed by that – but you know we went to many churches every time we landed somewhere. We would go and check out all the churches in the area. And you get to see the difference between active faith and kind of lazy faith, and weird and not faith.

But, you know, it's just such a subtle difference between lazy faith and active faith. Yes. And so that intrigued me and it troubled me and it still troubles me today. Like, we have to revitalize our churches. We have to get people *doing* things, not just going to church. And we should be doing it together. Like one thing that struck me was when we tried to save my church, there

were 4 in the area who were also in the same denomination and they had never been inside our church. They were within 5 miles of us. We had never done anything together.

And so, it struck me like, *why?* We're all members of the same faith, we're even members of the same denomination, and we still didn't work together in this little area that we live in to do anything of import. We just stayed within our little 4 walls and our happy little family and kept going to church. And yeah, a lot of us were doing things in our work and in our, on our own time in our communities. I mean, it wasn't like we were all just dead in our faith, but we also didn't motivate the rest of our church. We didn't mobilize as a church.

And so that was kind of the struggle in my heart when I started writing this. And at the same time, I was teaching in the field of autism. I had been in that for nine-ish years by then. And the group that I had then, the group of boys and girls that I had at that time, they were always, all so dear to my heart, but this group was especially underestimated. They had some extreme talents like baby Sheldon, I call him, who was in my class at that time. And we had several other really smart guys who—people didn't see them as smart. They didn't see their gifts. They totally underestimated what they were capable of doing.

And I watched the depression grow and I watched this self-worth diminish in middle school. I was a middle school autism teacher at the time. And you know, middle school is when kids really struggle with that. Yeah. But when you have a disability like autism, and you are constantly underestimated and left out of things because people don't know how to get to know you or don't know where to look at you for your gifts, like that you don't match their schema. So they just don't interact. And it isn't because they don't necessarily want to, but a lot of people just don't even know how to.

Donna Cowan [00:11:52]:

So it sounds to me like these two were pretty much tied together in that they were so isolated in their little portion or their little bubble or the little division that nobody knew how to reach out and make all of you a community, you know, to kind of coalesce and learn and reach out and as you said, employ each person's talent to lift all of you in both the church and with these children who have autism. And of course I know that back then, you didn't have a really big understanding of the spectrum of autism that we are now coming to understand. It was at that point, it's like you know, autism was considered something like well you know they're always going to be a child, they don't have any intelligence, but we now know that that's not necessarily true. There are different spectrums of what they're brilliant at and what they struggle with. So I mean, I can sort of see that.

Jennifer Porter [00:13:01]:

I had the whole spectrum in my classroom. Even that year, I had the range. And we were our own little family and our own little community and it was great. And we invited people in and we were getting our kids in the school and the teachers more involved. And that process took a really long time and a lot of work, but it was so worth it to see them connect.

Donna Cowan [00:13:26]:

Right, but you were still probably isolated to just that one school or that one area where you were getting that community, you're bringing that community together. And it does take an awful lot of work to pull these little bubbles or these little isolation tents together. And because it requires a lot of trust because that's what's building those walls. A lot of times it's that distrust of, you know, it's like, oh, well, our, you know, our church is better than that church because they do that. And we doubt, or you know, they have this going on and we don't, or whatever the difference is.

And again, you have that same thing with this isolation from these children who have autism where, you know, they're like, well our children are, quote, normal, and those children are not. There's that fear, you know, in that us versus them mentality that is kind of keeping that division there. And so it takes a long time to get that trust to pull that down and get the connections that you need. So I generally applaud you in not only recognizing that, but trying to do something about that.

Q: So I want to know, what made you want to write this extraordinary sci-fi fantasy series?

Jennifer Porter [00:14:55]:

I grew up reading all the time. I got in trouble one time because I was supposed to be in bed and I was reading a fantasy novel and I didn't want to quit, and it was one of those big fat ones. So, you know, I was like halfway through, I was just getting to the good part. And I slept, I shared a bed with my sister and a room with my sister at the time. And so I waited until she was asleep, which didn't take very long, and I put blankets down over the side and I was under there, you know, with my lamp on its side reading this novel until the wee hours when I suddenly looked up and realized that smoke was coming from the carpet and that I had basically set it on fire. I melted this plastic lamp into the ground while I was reading this book and didn't even notice it. It's right there. So that's what kind of a reader I am. And my mom loves to tell that story now.

But oh, she almost killed me. You know, if the fire didn't kill me, my mom was going to. And she's like, "Your sister was in that bed!" I'm like, "...but I put it out right away..."

Anyway, I grew up reading fantasy novels. And this novel started as a fantasy novel in high school. I didn't know where it was going. And I was a huge fan of sci-fi on TV too. I love *Star Trek*, I cannot get enough *Star Trek*. I love all *Star Trek*. But in high school, I read this series and you can't even hardly find it now, but it's called the *Wolfwalker* series. The first book is *Wolfwalker* and it's by Tara K. Harper. And I just love that series because I love animals. And there was a telepathic connection between the main character and her wolf friend. So they go off to have adventures.

And so it started as kind of an homage to that series. I didn't know where it was going. So like 25 years later, all of these things kind of converged in my life. And I'm like, this book is how I'm going to kind of cause an awareness that things need to change. You know, that people are using established science and established doctrine to justify laws and traditions and ways of thinking whose origins or continued relevance and utility need to be questioned.

You know, maybe it started for a good reason, but it needs to be reexamined. Or maybe we had good motives for doing it, but we executed it wrongly, you know, or it grew that way over time. For whatever reason, we always were like, we've done it this way, this is the way we do things. And this is why we point to the same thing all the time. And then we don't really look at it. We don't examine it. We just trust it.

Donna Cowan [00:17:57]:

Right. Well, you know, I love that that was part of your book. We talked about, you know, it's a big book, it's 640 pages, and it really has a deep dive into things that are different and focusing on what we believe versus what is true.

Q: And I'm curious to find out, what are you hoping the readers get from that dichotomy, that kind of inner struggle?

Jennifer Porter [00:18:28]:

I really do want people to think, like when they read my book, I of course want them to be sucked in and entertained, but I also want it to be one of those books that sticks with you and makes you think about the way that *your* life is being lived. And to realize that there may be

things in your life that you've not examined or that you've accepted because someone you trusted told you or because that's the way it's always been.

I want people to question. I want people to examine critically, like what they believe. And why. You know, and to me, you know, as a Christian, it goes back to the Bible itself. You need to check with the Holy Spirit and you need to, because he's truth. He's the true truth. And in my book, I have the "True Path" that people are expected to follow. It's like the doctrine, it's been laid out and you have these expected things that you're supposed to do every day, which are good things for Christians to do, but now it's law. And if you're not able to live up to that, you know, there are some dire consequences for the people in my book.

And in real life, right now, there are still dire consequences if you don't fit in. You know, if you don't follow established, yeah, if you don't conform to the belief system of the day, you still have some pretty dire, maybe not freezing you like in my book, but you know, they're still pretty dire. And in my book, there's kind of levels of direness too. Like you might get demoted to a different dome or you might have to go work outside cleaning up all the things that get fried on the dome. You know, those are punishments that they had for lesser things that that didn't necessarily throw you completely off the True Path...

Donna Cowan [00:20:32]:

I'm gonna interrupt you there because we're going to talk about the book. So I love the book, it's called Frozen, and I'm not sure, is it Xenovia, is that correct?

Jennifer Porter [00:20:42]:

A lot of people, okay. I'm just gonna say that as a former fantasy reader, I have made up enough pronunciations for things and then I get really attached to my own pronunciation. And so when I hear somebody else say it, I don't like it. And so I give you the freedom to say it however you want. But I do put a suggested pronunciation guide in the back because I did have some readers like, I just want you to tell me how. And so if you want me to tell you how, I say it in *my* mind, I say 'je-no-va.'

Donna Cowan [00:21:14]:

Xianova, okay well that makes sense. So it's the Xianova Chronicles and this is book one. And so the backdrop to the book without giving away too much, and quite frankly, I haven't read the

whole thing, but I'm still excited and plowing through. And you know, it's very futuristic. It is in the year, I believe, 3019 or something along those lines.

There is, you know, religion has shaped the day, as she said, the true path. Everything in their daily life is committed to what all of those rules and guidelines have been set to, even down to genetic markers that indicate you're either this or that, or, you know, how tall or how short you are, and what your job is, and how you're able to interact with the different levels of society.

It's really quite disturbing in how easily you can see that and the coalescing of what we're seeing today, where you do have these non-conforming groups of individuals who would be considered complete outsiders and would be, as you said – the ultimate punishment is in the name of science, they're freezing them until they can come up with a cure.

Jennifer Porter [00:22:39]:

It's a blessing. It's not a curse. It's not a punishment. We're going to save you. Okay. You have to think about it like you're *supposed* to think about it, Donna, because that's the way you're supposed to think about it. It is a blessing that we're giving you. And you know, if you have a child who has some kind of birth defect or whatever, we're blessing your child with a chance to be cured from that someday in the future. And don't worry, we'll do time rehab. They'll be okay. As long as it happens within 200 years, because we don't have room to go beyond that.

Donna Cowan [00:23:17]:

Right. It's pretty interesting. I love the kind of concept behind this.

Q: So I want to know, what would you like readers to take away from this book, because for me, it was a kind of a startling revelation of where the path we're headed to is going to end?

Jennifer Porter [00:23:40]:

I, you know, I want to make people think about our society, about themselves, examine their viewpoints and reasons for doing things, even ones that you might not even have consciously thought about before.

So in my book, I did try to dredge up, through the way I set up the society, the kind of things that we do today that just with a 1 degree shift could end up something really bad. And where we are right now, you know, things are improving for people with autism and, you know, things

are improving in general as far as inclusion and acceptance of differences. At least on the outside they are.

But as far as *actual reality* goes, you know, things are still, on the inside of people, much the same as they were. And that's where I want the change to take place.

That's what I want people to take away is like, what am I like on the inside? Do I really do, do I really believe what I say I believe? Do I really act on that in the way that I should. And I equally want non-Christians to read this book and enjoy it, but also be drawn to thinking about what does, what do I believe and why?

But also like, If you're thinking about Christianity as a non-Christian, I want you to be able to see that Pharisee-like Christians do not stand for us all, and that they're not maybe living out their faith the way they should. So I kind of want even non-Christians to see that there's a difference between rules-based Christianity and spirit-led truth in Christianity.

And so there's a difference between what we take as truth and what the Holy Spirit gives us as truth. You know, and so sometimes it's the same and sometimes it's not, but I think everybody needs to examine it.

And I want my characters, the characters in the book—you know, it's a dystopian book. So for Christians who read it, it'll be different than your usual Christian book. For people who read sci-fi, it's gonna be a lot different than your usual sci-fi.

Donna Cowan [00:26:05]:

Right.

Jennifer Porter [00:26:06]:

I even had one reviewer say, "I didn't believe that you could do Christian and sci-fi in the same book." There's actually more than one Christian sci-fi book. Okay, mine is not the only one by far, but she was amazed at what I did with it. And is impressed with that. It said it really made her think. And that's what I want. I want you to go into it skeptical. And, and...really examine. The world. And *your* world. And I want it to be, you know, I didn't really answer some of the questions that I pose in the book because I don't want to be a preacher. It's not about what I think is right necessarily, sort of it is, but sort of it's not too.

Donna Cowan [00:26:59]:

You're posing the questions and I think that's what authors have to do. We have to bring reality in a non-reality way and ask the question. Then let the reader figure it out for themselves because we can't answer all the questions.

And you know, it really reminded me so much, when I was reading through the parts that I was reading, I kept hearing that poem that was written, in Germany during the 1930s, you know, the late 1930s, where this poet wrote, "when they came for this group, I didn't say anything, and when they came for that group I didn't say anything, and they came for that group, I didn't say anything, and then finally they came for me and there was nobody left to say anything."

And that's kind of the feeling that you get through this whole thing and the struggle that you see with the main characters as they go through this, is trying to deal with their struggle of something that they have believed their whole life, was absolutely true, but then they see these moments where that can't be right. That can't be right, but then again they don't feel like it's their job to say anything, and they're fearful of what will happen to them if they do.

Jennifer Porter [00:28:22]:

Well, in their society, you know, purity is everything. Purity with a capital P, purity. Because their goal as Christians in my book. Is to become as much like God as possible. So purity in every way. So if you're not pure genetically right now, and you might have problems down the road. They see that as a consequence of sin. You know, because original sin caused us to have all that stuff, right? So we're gonna try to fix you so that you don't have that anymore, you know?

And it started probably, you know, way back when we decided we could cure cancer. And so these people that had cancer that were frozen were able to be cured and come back. And then we decided that was a good idea, because we might be able to do that for more people. And so then they started freezing anybody that they might be able to cure, you know, so they wanted to help people. It was a good thing.

But then they carried it to extremes and *enforced*. In my book, when you get to the opening of it, it's been happening for so long, no one questions it. And no one is allowed to question it.

Donna Cowan [00:29:30]:

Right.

Jennifer Porter [00:29:31]:

You question it... They see that as a sign of *psychological* impurity.

Donna Cowan [00:29:36]:

Right. Exactly. You're creating an impurity in yourself, even though it's just, it's actually intelligence.

Jennifer Porter [00:29:44]:

So it isn't like they necessarily stifle all intelligence or all debate or anything, but certain things that you might say against the...

Donna Cowan [00:29:55]:

Well, questioning the true path seemed to be the line in the sand.

Jennifer Porter [00:30:01]:

You don't get away with that very much. So yeah, I wanted people to see that.

Like we actually today have a lesser form of that. And with a one-degree shift, we could end up there. We could end up where we're told what to believe and we're told – you know – we've seen different governments throughout history that have done similar things – so it's not like it's way out of imagination that it could happen again, or that Christians could be the ones doing it.

And I want you to think about that. Like, where are we going as Christians? What is this leading to in the future? If we keep thinking like this and teaching our kids to think like this, what will happen?

So I want people to see that, like... You *have* to examine it because what if what you believe is a one degree shift from the truth, ...that becomes a 100% shift from the truth?

Donna Cowan [00:31:01]:

Right, and that's exactly why I felt like this was an absolute view into the future of one of the paths that it could lead. It was very startling to me because I could absolutely see that connection between the now and that future. It really kind of grabbed me by the throat.

Q: So I want to know what you think readers will think of your book in 10 to 20 years?

Jennifer Porter [00:31:36]:

Well, I had this problem as I was writing it that some of the things that I predicted actually came true before I was done writing it. So I was like, “oh crap, I better get this sucker out or it's gonna be all the old news. They're gonna think I just wrote about old stuff.”

But in 10 or 20 years, I hope that people, I hope that many of the things that I thoroughly researched 3 years ago have come to pass because I've seen a lot of the technological advances that I predicted from what we have today – we already have a step towards what I have in my book. And in some cases, what I have in my book is really only a step away from what we already have in research. And I did that on purpose, partly because, you know, there was this giant bio world where everyone was wiped out and they had technology, it had to come back.

So it's not like a thousand years ahead in technology. They had to rebuild technology in my book in the history of it, you know, the imaginary history. So—the things in my book aren't actually as far away technologically as you might imagine they are. We actually have a lot of the technology, similar technology to what they have. The 1960s computer version is what we have today compared to our computer version. And so, in my book, some of the technology is the 1960s computer version of what's in my book.

And so I'm hoping that in 10 or 20 years, it's not going to be the 1960s version anymore, that we'll be much closer to some of those really cool things that I can see scientifically.

And I know that there are groups that have already started working on solutions and steps toward inclusion and critically thinking about how churches operate and our Christian faith in general. There's lots of people working on that. And I hope that, you know, *more, more* people get involved with that and are looking back.

And I hope when the people who have read my book look back 20 years from now. I hope they see it as somewhat prophetic, but also – a catalyst for change. You know, I want them to look at it as an influential book in that it made people think about things that are wrong with

Christianity today, things that are wrong with our thinking, you know, and just really a call to action.

Donna Cowan [00:34:16]:

Q: Do you hope that it falls in this same category as kind of a warning for the future, similar to Orson Welles' *1984*?

Jennifer Porter [00:34:25]:

Kind of, yeah. Like that or *Fahrenheit 451*, you know? Yeah, sort of like that, but not quite as... I guess it kind of *is* as dire as that, what I wrote.

Donna Cowan [00:34:40]:

It's just a different approach. I mean, I think the difference between those books and your books is that your book is a softer segue that is almost chilling and how easy it is to see that future.

Jennifer Porter [00:34:56]:

Yeah, I'm hoping for that. Yeah, a little bit more subtle than – a little bit more subtle change from what we know to be. You know, I wasn't going for a 'smack-you-in-the-face' kind, but I did kind of want to grab you by the throat. So I'm glad that that's how you're feeling while you're reading it, that it's like, "Whoa, that's not that far off from..." And I've had a lot of comments like that: "That's not that far off from *my* faith." You know, the same thing that they're believing that is causing all these bad things to happen that you can *clearly see are not okay*. You know, as a person reading the book, you're like, "That is not okay. But I understand why they're doing it."

Donna Cowan [00:35:38]:

Yes, exactly. That was, you can clearly see how they got from today to that. And it didn't seem like it was a long walk either.

Jennifer Porter [00:35:48]:

Right. I didn't want you to look at them like they were sickos. I wanted you to understand even the quote-unquote bad people as people with good intentions. You know, people who thought they were Christians or actually *are* Christians. But are doing things for the wrong reasons or, you know, just not thinking about what they're doing very deeply.

Or sometimes in the case of one of them in particular that you're going to grow to hate, he really wants, he really, really, really, really believes in the True Path. And he really believes he's doing the right thing. He totally is believing it and his reasons, I hope, make sense to people. That when you read it, it is just a smack in the chest because-

Donna Cowan [00:36:41]:

I think I just started on that part. I think I know who you're talking about.

Jennifer Porter [00:36:46]:

Yes. We all want to believe in what we're doing and that we're doing the right thing for the right reasons. And in the Bible, it says, "every person can justify their actions to themselves, but God weighs your heart," you know, and that's true. We all do justify our actions to ourselves. So that I want you to see, I want you to see that these people had good intentions. With very different outcomes because of what they actually thought or followed. You know, was it tradition or was it actually God that I'm listening to? Am I listening to the Spirit talking to my heart, or am I listening to what I've been taught? And yeah, so you're gonna see that come right out in the front...

Donna Cowan [00:37:33]:

Well it is. It is an absolutely amazing book. I highly recommend it. It is subtle, but startling, and completely eye-opening and page turning. I had such a hard time putting it down. It's like, I could have melted your lamp last night when I was reading it.

Jennifer Porter [00:37:55]:

I appreciate that so much. That just fills me up with joy. As a writer, that's like the highest compliment I could possibly get from somebody. So, you know, I appreciate it very much. Thank you.

Donna Cowan [38:07]:

You're very welcome.

Q: So I wanna know what obstacles or challenges that you ran into in either writing or publishing this book.

Jennifer Porter [38:16]:

Well, you know, back in the day I was much more of a pantsner style writer, so I didn't like to plan I just believed in, you know, the creativity process and letting it come out and hit the page. But I wrote the first 3 chapters that way – but then like I said I didn't know where they were going. Didn't have the themes, you know, or the plot laid out in my mind. I kinda had a sort-of plot in my mind, but I didn't really know why things were happening or why the characters would choose to do that. So it got stashed. So that was the first obstacle.

The second one was, you know, the same one that a lot of people run into as writers: life. You know, I had kids, I had an ex-husband who was abusive and we had to get away from that. And then we had to move on. And then I became a teacher, and I was working 60-80 hours a week as a special ed teacher and trying to write on the side. Like – I love writing. And I love reading. But as a teacher, I found very, very little time or energy for doing anything else after teaching ...and what I had, I had to, you know, kind of fill in the blanks with my family a little bit and they were getting shortchanged. So it felt, like, very selfish of me to write.

For some time I had to struggle with those feelings and find time to write and find time to teach. And – it's a hard balance, and I'm not gonna lie. It really – it was hard. That was one of the hardest obstacles. It's also hard when you don't have any energy to make yourself do anything that takes energy, even if you love it. Like I love clarinet, I love playing the piano, I love writing, I love reading, I love gardening, but all those things take effort and energy. And—it's so much easier to park yourself in front of a TV when you're just dead tired.

And so that motivational piece was very difficult. We had lots of deaths in our family. My mother-in-law moved in with us. You know, I didn't have any writing group or accountability partner back then. So when I started things were really difficult. It felt like I was alone. And why am I doing this? I could it felt selfish. It felt impossible. You know, and then finally, I did find some accountability. Like you said, we met like in Igniting Souls with Kary Oberbrunner doing Author Academy Elite, and from that program, I met lots of people that are still my wonderful writing friends today. And I'm in many other writing groups as well. And I would highly recommend that for anyone who wants to be a writer. Like you need your writing buddies. You need people that you can work with online or check in with from time to time for that

accountability, but also for encouragement and for bouncing ideas off of, and for figuring out the marketing piece and you know just people who have walked that path before you are so helpful or work or even walking it with you you know so...

That had fallen into place and you know, life seemed to be going on—and I was still teaching and everything. So I still struggled, but then I had a concussion and it was actually my seventh concussion, um, that took me out of teaching and pretty much everything else. So I was nine-tenths of the way done writing the book. At that point, I had like the last 10 chapters to write. And I thought I was going to be done before Christmas.

And this was October 1st when it happened. So it was the beginning of the school year. And I couldn't write, I couldn't look at a screen. I didn't have access to my vocabulary. I have an enormous vocabulary. I'm a great speller. And all those things were gone. So I couldn't put words on a page to save my life. I couldn't even hand—my handwriting coordination was bad too. So when I wrote, I couldn't read my own handwriting. So that was an enormous struggle coming back from that too. And it took over a year before I was able to write again.

And so in the beginning of 2022, I finally got back together enough [because I'm still struggling with the end of that concussion and I've had 2 more since then. And I've slowed the recovery down. What happens when you have a concussion is you become very susceptible to getting more concussions. So things that might not give someone else a concussion. Give me a concussion.]

Donna Cowan [00:42:55]:

Right.

Jennifer Porter [00:42:56]:

[So as I call it, having a glass head now.]

Donna Cowan [00:43:01]:

Yeah, and it does make you more susceptible and easier. It's kind of like having an exposed broken arm. It's like any kind of little bump or jostle is going to damage it further. And it's kind of the same way. It's your head, it's kind of floating in a fluid and it's like, you know, if that fluid gets pierced in your brain, it kind of bumps up against the bone. It's like that viscosity has kind

of lost its ability to shield you from that bump. So it's kind of like a thin spot to keep hitting. And it's not a... Yeah, I don't know.

Jennifer Porter [00:43:45]:

I don't know all the particulars of how that happens. I just know that it's true from experience, unfortunately. But, you know, coming back from that in 2022, I finally got those last 10 chapters pushed through.

And, you know, I'm still kind of climbing through that and learning how to market. And marketing is the latest struggle – and I'm still facing ADHD stuff from my concussion. And that recovery is still a struggle. But I'm finding, you know, like blurb copy and marketing copy to be harder to write than the book by far.

So, you know, there's all sorts of struggles and obstacles I've had in writing and publishing. And so what I would say to other writers is don't give up. Lesson here is just don't give up. Believe that it's there in your heart for a reason that you want to write. And even if you're not a good writer now, you know, in your own mind, you have that desire for a reason. And there are tools and people that can help you become better. And nobody's ever a perfect writer. You know, there are always going to be typos in your book. There's always going to be like, as much as I hate saying that, because I'm a perfectionist, Nothing will ever be perfect. So you have to just take that first action. You have to be willing to take the first step and let it be ugly. You know, and just keep it be ugly until it gets better.

Donna Cowan [00:45:16]:

Well, and what do I always tell you about, you know, if your first book out in the market is perfect, then you have to live up to that forever and ever. Whereas if you put it out there and it's good enough for right now, then the next one only has to be better. That's a much more achievable goal for me to work on.

Jennifer Porter [00:45:37]:

Maybe you should have mentioned that to me 3 years ago.

Donna Cowan [00:45:41]:

Well, maybe, but you know, a lot of people, it's like sometimes you're only ready to hear things when you're ready to hear it.

Jennifer Porter [00:45:48]:

I know. And like I said, I'm a perfectionist. So I'm not sure I'm ever ready to hear that. But, you know.

Donna Cowan [00:45:56]:

Well, but you know, I know you know this as a teacher, you're going to learn so much more from making mistakes than you ever will from being perfect.

Jennifer Porter [00:46:03]:

You do, you do. And honestly, here's the thing, you cannot edit or perfect what you have not done.

Donna Cowan [00:46:10]:

Exactly. A blank page is really hard to edit.

Jennifer Porter [00:46:14]:

Yeah, if you don't get it onto the page, somehow, some way in some ugly form, you cannot make it better. You can't make it perfect. You can't make it even an iota better. You know, those weird little thoughts flying around in your head. So if you actually want to be a writer, you have to spit out the ugly stuff and then work on it.

Donna Cowan [00:46:33]:

Right. And sometimes you do, and sometimes people are surprised at how eloquent they are. Like I say all the time, and you know this from coming to my writers group, throw the spaghetti at the wall and see what sticks. Because that's kind of the way you need to approach those first steps into writing, we don't always know precisely where we want to start. We don't precisely know what our voice is going to be or what point of view we're going to start with. So again, just throw it all out there and see what works until you get it on that page and look at it, you're not going to know. You're not going to know what feels comfortable to you, whether you prefer to

write in third person or first person or from an omniscient narrator, or whether you want to speak like a normal person or you want to be more precise with your language.

A lot of times, when you're in the beginning, you don't even know specifically what genre you're going for. You have an idea, but you don't know for sure until you get it there. And, as an editor, I tell people all the time, I can't do anything with a blank page, there's nothing to edit, there's nothing to fix, there's nothing to correct, there's nothing to comment on.

So yes, I agree with you, get it on the page however you have to, we have amazing technology today. We can do voice to text, we can type, we can record ourselves, you know, we can write with pen and paper and then transcribe it. I mean, they even have Rocketbooks that will transcribe your handwritten pages. It's quite amazing. When I started writing years ago, it was either typing it on a typewriter or handwriting it and then having somebody else transcribe it before you. It's like there was a little bit of the dictation, but then again you had to have somebody transcribe all of that. It was a process and you haven't written a manuscript, unless you had to type it out on a typewriter with white-out.

Jennifer Porter [00:48:47]:

And I did, I have to type it in. I want to show you something. I'm going to hold it up because someday this is going to be worth money here. Do you know what these are?

Donna Cowan [00:48:56]:

Oh yes, the floppy disks.

Jennifer Porter [00:49:00]:

Okay, let me get the right one up to the camera there. You see the name on that?

Donna Cowan [00:49:04]:

No, I can't see it.

Jennifer Porter [00:49:06]:

Okay, it says Shaanleigh. And you, having started reading my book, know that that's the main character's name. The date on this disc is 3-27-97. And so it's a, it's a 3 1/2 inch floppy disk for

those of you listening to the podcast, and I still have it. That's from my Smith Corona word processor; that is not from a computer. That's where it started. But well, that was where it started being typed, because I hand wrote the first copy, and then it was printed out on a dot matrix printer when I was in high school. And then after that, I transcribed it onto my word processor. And from there, it eventually made it onto a 6 gig hard drive computer which was the top of the line then.

Of course now we're way past that, but oh there's so much stuff available for writers now. Any kind of organization that you think is going to work for you. I'm sure there's a program for it right now. You know, I love Scrivener and Plotter, but my sister likes the Snowflake Method, which does not make sense to me, but there's software for that now too. So you can do that.

There's so many things to help you get where you want to be and do what you want to do as far as being a writer. So I definitely would say if you have that dream or that goal, that ambition, and it sounds like, you know, Kary always told us like 80% of people in the world want to write a book, but only this tiny amount actually follow through with it. If it's there and you really want to do it, you'll find a way to do it.

But it does take just spitting it out and figuring it out as you go sometimes. But also I said, find yourself some writer friends to keep you motivated and keep you going and keep you inspired. And I mean, people in your life are gonna inspire you anyway. And my dogs have inspired me, but...

Donna Cowan [00:51:03]:

It's different. They don't understand all the things that you have to do as a writer. We talked about this earlier, it is a lonely isolating business. You need to have other writers that understand. It's not about if they can help you or not, it's that they're there. If you're feeling down, maybe they can lift you up. If you're feeling frustrated, then they can help you get through that. I know for me, just having those writing groups motivates me to do it. Whether I feel like it that day or not. Sure, I'd love to sleep in on those mornings, especially Monday mornings.

When I know other people are depending on me and are expecting me, then that motivates me in that way to get up and get there, whether or not I feel like I'm going to want to write that day or not. Generally, by the time we get through the introductions and talk and stuff like that, I'm ready to go. I'm ready to get some writing done. Sometimes that's just a great first step to get you into that habit and into that mode.

I mean, we talk about it at different times, about creating your writing space. I would say that's kind of one of the first steps is to get you a writing group, so you kind of build that consistency.

Jennifer Porter [00:52:34]:

Definitely. And I, you know, I want to put a little caveat in there because I know there's people listening or thinking like "I am the world's biggest introvert. I don't need that connection. I actually look forward to time by myself." I want to tell you, I am the world's biggest introvert. You can't beat me. But as far as motivation goes, when it comes to pushing yourself to do something, that voice in your head is not enough, sometimes, to get you to do the thing you need to do. And you don't have all the knowledge you need. I don't care how smart you are. You don't have it all. You might be the best editor in the world. 'Cause I know I feel that way sometimes, but I can tell you, I still needed an editor to help me with my book. You know, you just need those other people and there's no way to do anything in this life, completely isolated.

Yes. Writing is a great profession if you're an introvert, but know that having a writing group is still like, and I love that we can do it online now because me actually going out somewhere as an introvert probably would never have happened very often. But now you have these groups online, like yours, Donna, where you can just, you can be in your comfortable environment all by yourself. But not. And for me, that was so helpful to have that available. And not have to necessarily be with people, but also to be able to be with people.

Donna Cowan [00:54:06]:

Right, exactly. Feel that camaraderie without feeling obligated to.

Jennifer Porter [00:54:13]:

But you know, as an introvert, if you feel the need, you can shut, you can mute them off. Or you can shut off your camera or you can. You know, even leave the group if you want. I just love that about our writing groups, but—in addition to that though, like that piece of having those people in your life that you can turn to for that motivation, encouragement and support is so important.

Donna Cowan [00:54:37]:

And recommendations! But I'm also going to add to that. If you are truly that introverted, I want you to think ahead to when the book is out and available, aren't you going to need these smaller steps to being comfortable talking about your book, to giving interviews such as we're doing now about your book, about promoting your books. These writing groups are very understanding of that aspect. They give you a soft place to land, and still build up that confidence that you're going to need to do that marketing and promotion when the book is out. So it's a good kind of tipping point for you where you can kind of build up your comfort level, so to speak.

Jennifer Porter [00:55:27]:

Definitely. It definitely does. Like I know when I started teaching, that standing in front of a classroom petrified me, but it also energized me. So there was this weird dichotomy every time. And there still is when I teach, whenever I teach, and I've been teaching for 20 plus years. So like, whenever I get up in front, I am both scared to death and energized by it and I almost feel the same way when I'm writing like when you're looking at the blank page, you are scared to death that what you put on that page is going to be absolute crap. And then you're also really energized and jazzed that it might be the best thing in the world for somebody else to read, like it might be their new favorite book. And you know as a writer...

Donna Cowan [00:56:14]:

I'm going to respond to that because I hear that a lot. It's like, "Oh, what I'm going to write is going to be absolute crap." Let me tell you a big secret. Everybody's first draft is absolute crap. Get the crap out of the way to get to the good stuff.

Jennifer Porter [00:56:28]:

You have to write crap in order to write good stuff. You have to, so just accept it.

And I say that not accepting it myself. I'm a complete hypocrite in that I stare at blank pages as much as the next person and go, "Oh my God, Oh my God, Oh my God. I don't even know how to put the first sentence down. I don't even know what the first sentence should be. I don't even know where the first sentence should come from because I don't even know which point in the book I'm going to start writing." Like which point of the story is going to be the beginning. You know, how am I going to decide that?

Well, put it on the page because now you have Scrivener and now you have, you know, whatever other software you use, where you can take your computer and just move it around. You know, you can take your computer and erase and edit and you don't need whiteout and you don't need a transcriptionist to fix it for you. It's super easy today.

And because of that, there's a lot of competition too. I mean, there's a downside to all that, but the upside is you have such an enormous opportunity to make your dream come true.

Donna Cowan [00:57:30]:

Well, And let's not forget that, with all of this diversity of thoughts and ideas, there's always going to be somebody somewhere that needs to hear your story and the way you tell it. And I see that as a big obstacle for writers. So we're gonna have to move on here a little bit as much as I love talking to you about all of these things.

Q: So I want you, because we're talking about reviews here in season 2, to write us a review about your book.

Jennifer Porter [00:58:02]:

Oh—of course it's the best book I've ever read. There's the short version.

No. I have had to write the blurb so many different times and had to write short versions of it that I'm just going to give you the version like if I was going to be like a book reviewer maybe I would write this about my book. So: the Frozen is a Christian dystopian science fiction novel set in the far future. So I'm going to give you the summary of the book here it is a short summary of what's going on. After Earth's population was decimated by a bio world war, there now exists a motley crew of mutated monsters, including dinosaurs, titanoboas, scorpion vines, slaughterhounds, and the one that readers voted the most fearsome of all, the lure toad. Christians took over the world and the wars that followed, nature reclaimed most of the landscape. The remnant of humanity now exists in systems of interconnected domes controlled by a world government. The tech in this book and the biotech is closer to becoming a reality than you might think. Featuring a strong female lead, genetic engineering and major characters with special needs such as autism, this epic beginning to the Xianovan Chronicles Trilogy questions the ways that we, especially as Christians, assign value to other human beings. The line between sincere faith and pure evil becomes very thin. So...

Donna Cowan [00:59:29]:

I like that. That's a really good description. So then let's hear your review of the book if you were a reader.

Jennifer Porter [00:59:36]:

Ohhh... My criticalness of myself might come out in that... I don't know if I want to tell you what I think about my book. Because I have a list of things that I will correct if there's ever a second edition. It's already started. It's like 18 long. But one of the things that I love about my book is that it turned out better than I thought it would. When I started writing it, I had one picture of how the plot was going to go, how the characters were going to be, et cetera. And I did tons of character research like I'm a personality test junkie. So I did lots about that. But I want the characters in the book to be real. And I think it did a pretty good job. And I've heard lots of comments about how the dog characters are alive and real. And that's because they are in fact based on real dogs. They're right behind me in the picture here. The one whose foot you've been seeing in front of the aquarium there is Jax, and he is my Chessie. And the other one that just wandered off the screen over there is a little lab mix named Chicken. And the two dogs in my book are based on her, and him. So. I mean, their personalities come through.

So, in my review, I would say the characters are realistic, the suspense will keep you reading and sucked in, and the deep exploration of themes will make you think. As far as the downside of this book, I have always been a long-winded person. I have always been a perfectionist and I definitely did a crap ton of research. And so trying to build a world from scratch for the first time, this book is not what I would call perfect in that. I feel like sometimes some people get bogged down in my invented words, and the beginning of the book, like culture shock from the world building—and the world building kind of happens, it hits you, I think, for people who didn't invent this world, a little hard, like, it takes a while for you to really 'get' the world. And I think it's, it's not necessarily bad, but I. If I could go back and fix one part of my book, even better, I'd be working on the beginning of the book again, and all that worldbuilding and trying to be a little bit more...

Donna Cowan [01:02:21]:

Concise?

Jennifer Porter [01:02:25]:

Yes. I struggle with conciseness. And brevity.

And believe it or not, this book would be like 700 pages longer if I didn't have an editor and also really good alpha readers and beta readers. And also I did self-edit a lot. And I can tell you the beginning of the book is significantly better than the way it started. But it's still not – like my parents and my beta readers and my alpha readers all were telling me “It's great. Leave it alone and get it out there,” you know – but in my heart, I just want to keep messing with it until it was perfect.

And so I understand in my heart that I have left the beginning of the book in a place where I'm not 100% happy with it. But it is still pretty good. So I don't want to scare you away. If you like epic length novels, I think you'll like it. I think you'll enjoy this book. If you are a short book reader, you might still like it because my mom is, and she's read it 57 times and she still recommends it to people. And she is one of those people who definitely when I was writing poems as seventh grader told me flat out she hated them. Okay and then told other people she hated them too. So...

Donna Cowan [1:03:44]

So she's a great reviewer. I like that.

Jennifer Porter [1:03:53]

I want to give you that caveat. My mom is not telling me she likes this because she's my mom. She's telling me this and telling other people this and literally went all over my quote-unquote hometown. I wasn't born there. It's her hometown. But she went all over her hometown, and she took out ads and placed flyers, and went to the mall and like put little things on every table about my book and she talks about it to everyone. Part of that is because she is my mom and she's proud I wrote a book. The second thing is, she's read this book 57 times and she does like it, and she doesn't read sci-fi.

Donna Cowan [01:04:34]:

I'm going to stop you there because I want people to read this book for themselves. I want to hear what they have to say. And the purpose of us asking you to do your own review is we want our listeners to understand how simple and how easy it is.

She just gave you 4 different reviews of her book and she was just going on and on and on and there's problems and they're somewhere. And we learned that her mom is a great reviewer so I want her to start reviewing books for us.

Q: This is a series, so we want to know what's next and when we can expect book 2?

Jennifer Porter [01:05:14]:

Oh my gosh, book 2 is obviously next, but before book 2, I have an audiobook coming out and I just talked to Mike Domeny, you know Mike Domeny, right? Yeah, Mike Domeny is gonna be my audiobook narrator. And I just love the way he does voices. And—what I heard in—you know—I had to do some approval of what he's doing. And so I listened to like the first four chapters already and I cannot wait to hear the rest of it. It is just a whole different, I can't even describe to you what he has done with his voice to this book, but it is so much different than reading it for me. He has created a whole new thing with the audiobook.

So if you like audiobooks, I think you're going to really, really love this. He's doing a great job with all the voices. And in my book, that was a challenge to find somebody that could do both female and male voices well, because I have like five main characters, or five major characters whose perspectives it shifts between. And you know, there's, of course, the main character, Shaanleigh who's a female, but most of the other major characters are male. Right. And so I needed somebody who could do both believably. And there's so many other expendable characters in there too. Like we have lots of guardsmen running around in there. And if you are a *Star Trek* lover, these guys are red shirts. So just keep that in mind as you're reading. Some of them are going to die. When I say some, there are 98 characters. About 10.

Donna Cowan [01:07:02]:

All right, well I'm going to cut you off with that.

Q: So when can we expect this book 2? We want to encourage you to leave that perfectionism alone and get on to that second book so we can start reading it.

Jennifer Porter [01:07:16]:

Book 2 I hope will be out by later this year. I can't really put a date.

Donna Cowan [01:07:26]:

We will have you come back when it's available so we can talk about that.

Q: Can you tell our listeners where they can find your books? I really want them to go get a copy of this book. I think it's for everyone. I think there's something in there that everyone will connect to. It is a commitment to read, as we said, it's 640 pages, but I have to tell you, I'm flying through the pages. I'm not even noticing how long it is.

Jennifer Porter [01:07:54]:

I've heard that a lot. I've also heard some people who really struggle with that first part, like I said, but it does get better if you're reading the first part. I think as things come together past the initial culture shock and getting used to that technology and sci-finess of it. It'll fly after that.

Donna Cowan [01:08:13]:

Sure. Okay, so where can they find your books? Where can we get them?

Jennifer Porter [01:08:16]:

Oh, sorry, I didn't really answer the question. The—yeah, you can find my book on Amazon, Barnes and Noble.com. Basically anywhere that you can find an ebook, you should be able to find my book. Um, you can also find it on my website, which is <https://jenporterauthor.com>. And if you order it on my website, as the hard copy, there's a discount right now. And for the next several months, for sure, there will be a discount from the Amazon price. If you go to my site to order it, it will take longer than it takes from Amazon to get to you, but it will come signed. So if you want a signed copy and you want it at a discount, get it from my website. If you want it in two days so you can read it right now, buy it from Amazon. That's probably the fastest way to get it. So..

Donna Cowan [01:09:09]:

Well, we will put all the links in the show notes for everyone, so you don't need to run out and grab a pen and paper as she's rattling off these email addresses and these connections. We will have everything in the show notes for you.

Q: So I know you're on social media, where can they find you? You can get it from my website.

Jennifer Porter [01:09:26]:

Predominantly right now, I have a Facebook page, Facebook author page. I'm starting a TikTok page, so there's not much there right now, but it'll grow. And I love TikTok. I'm a TikTok lover, so hopefully I'm going to figure out how to do that as an author pretty soon here, and that'll become more of a thing. And the other place I am is Instagram. So Facebook, Instagram, TikTok are my author places, and Goodreads. I have a Goodreads profile too.

Donna Cowan [01:09:57]:

All right, well we will have those specific links for you in the show notes.

Q: So any upcoming events, newsletters, giveaways, or anything else that you would like to share with the audience before we jump over and do our tip of the week?

Jennifer Porter [01:10:13]:

Sure. If you're signing up for my newsletter on my website right now, you're going to get access to a secret page that I'm building with all sorts of background knowledge, research, upcoming news and events and stuff like that. So you'd be first on the list if you're in the newsletter and you have access to that page where you get "super secret info" on the background of the book and all that good stuff. And my progress on book 2—there's a progress meter on there and I'll keep updating. So there's that. And then when the audio book comes out here later this month, there'll be a promo that goes along with that so you can look for that as well.

Donna Cowan [01:10:51]:

Okay great. Well we hope we get that link before the show goes live. Even if it is after, we will update the show notes for you to connect with that audio book.

Q: Was there anything else you wanted to share before we go ahead and do our tip of the week?

Jennifer Porter [01:11:07]:

I'd just encourage people, don't give up, just go for it and do it.

Donna Cowan [01:11:11]:

All right, well we are so happy to have you here but we're going to talk about the tip of the week. So we've been trying to connect with what our author that we're featuring had a problem with.

Now for Jen, she talked about things like scheduling, accountability and marketing, and she was saying that it was all of those things working together and against her to get forward on her book.

So let's talk a little bit about scheduling and if you check out some of the previous episodes, you'll see we talk about this a lot. Timing, scheduling, creating that habit around writing is always going to be a difficult thing. My first thought is to tell you to make sure you make it in a schedule, make it an appointment for yourself that you are going to block out that time, that you are going to dedicate that time to writing or doing whatever you need to forward your writing. That can also be marketing, that could also be promotion, that could also be plotting. These are all the things that you need to do in and around writing. But commit that for yourself.

Also, another thing I talk about with scheduling is step away from those things that are pulling you away from writing. As she said, she has a varied amount of interest. But again, we have to pick and choose. As much as we would love to be able to do it all, we can't do it all. So you have to make those commitments and those choices. You know, if you're working on a book, especially if you're writing and creating and editing the book, you need to have that devoted time on a regular basis because it's more difficult to get back into it if you're jumping around and you're leaving these gaps and spaces in between.

So I would say, maybe don't watch that TV show every week. In fact, most of them are streaming now so you can save them and watch them later. You're not missing too much, or they will come out on streaming soon enough, so you can catch up later. If you're gardening, gardening a lot of times is seasonal, so maybe plan your book writing around those off seasons from gardening. Or if you're reading, reading is great, but maybe again, plan the reading season opposite from your writing season. So those are things to kind of work on for scheduling.

We talked a lot here on this show about accountability. Find those people and places and organizations. Writing groups are not the only thing. There are many, many organizations that you can belong to that will help you through your writing process. One that I recommend highly is the Authors Guild. There's also specific writing groups for different genres. There's the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators if you're writing children's books. There's also sci-fi and fantasy writers. There's romance writers groups. There's all kinds of literary and memoir

writers groups. So go search for those. If that's where you need to be, those people are going to be more specific to what you're writing and advice on that—where accountability groups are just more of a place together to write and keep each other motivated, and encouraged.

Then when we're talking about marketing, my simple answer here, you're gonna hear me say this a lot, a lot, a lot, so listen up. If you're worried about marketing, you're struggling with marketing, it's because you have the funnel upside down. You need to look at the end. What is it that you want? Not what you can do. It's, what is it you want? Do you want more sales? Do you want more of a bigger platform? Do you want more followers? Do you want more reviews? You have to decide what you want the result to be, to decide how you're going to market, how you're going to promote.

Once you figure out what you want, then it's going to become very obvious very quickly what you don't want. So once you know what things are not going to help you, as I said, if you're writing a children's book, promoting your book in a book about barstools and bar rooms is probably not going to be very helpful to you. Whether you're wanting reviews or sales or anything—but, if you're writing a book that's more in line with that, then sure, it would work great for you.

But again, is that the audience you're going for? Are you going for them for the right reason? That might get you in front of people who may read that, but maybe you can narrow that down and be a little more specific. Is it more about people who like fighting in general or a specific kind of fighting, or is it just people that enjoy that kind of activity in general. So again, as long as you know where you're going, the path becomes a little clearer and a little easier to figure out. Try to be as specific as you can of what you're going for.

Again, are you going for five reviews? Are you going for reviews in general? Are you going for reviews specifically to Amazon, specifically to another retailer? These things will help you figure out how to get there.

So I'm going to leave it at that. I know it's a tip and it's short and sweet. Of course, If you have more questions about that, we encourage you to go to thewritersparachute.com and leave us any of your questions or comments. You can also leave questions and comments on the podcast on YouTube or any of the podcast platforms. And then of course, reach out to us on social media. We are on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter @writerparachute. That's writerparachute “with no s.”

We want to thank you, Jen, for being with us today. We love your book. We hope you come back when book 2 is back with us. And as always, I am always so grateful to be the host of The Writers' Parachute, guiding author and writer dreams to a perfect landing. We hope that you find this place a creative space for you to land your own dreams too. Until next time, bye!

Jennifer Porter [1:17:37]

Bye, and thank you!